



**living wage**  
for families campaign



## Reaching out to employers about the living wage

If there is something that you need to know but it isn't included here please see if it's answered on our website [www.livingwageforfamilies.ca](http://www.livingwageforfamilies.ca). There are sections that provide more information on the living wage as well as a section dedicated to providing information for employers. Please download and review our [Guide to Becoming a Living Wage Employer](#).

### Five essential tips for reaching out to employers

#### 1. Know the employer

Prepare for reaching out to the employer like you might for a job interview or a meeting where the first impression counts. You should spend some time on the internet and the website of the employer.

You should be able to answer the following questions about the employer before approaching them:

- a) Is the employer small (5 to 10 employees), medium (10 to 50) or large (varying by sector)?
- b) Where are the decision makers located within the company or organization?
- c) What are the opportunities and challenges of the sector?
- d) What are the values of the company/organization?

Employers don't expect you to know everything about them but this provides a good starting point for a conversation. For example: if you weren't able to find out the number of staff on the website you can ask once you arrange an in-person meeting.

#### 2. Know the living wage

You don't need to know the answer for any question that might be asked about the living wage – it is better to let an employer know that you will follow up with an answer rather than provide information that you aren't sure about.

- a) Identify the living wage in your community. We have a map on our website at: [www.livingwageforfamilies.ca/living\\_wages\\_in\\_bc\\_and\\_canada](http://www.livingwageforfamilies.ca/living_wages_in_bc_and_canada)
- b) One out of every three poor children in BC lives in a home with at least one adult working full-time, full-year. Child poverty in BC is very much a low-wage story.<sup>i</sup>
- c) Poor children are being raised in poor families. Of the 27 factors identified as having an impact on child development, up to 80% were seen to improve as family income increase.<sup>ii</sup>

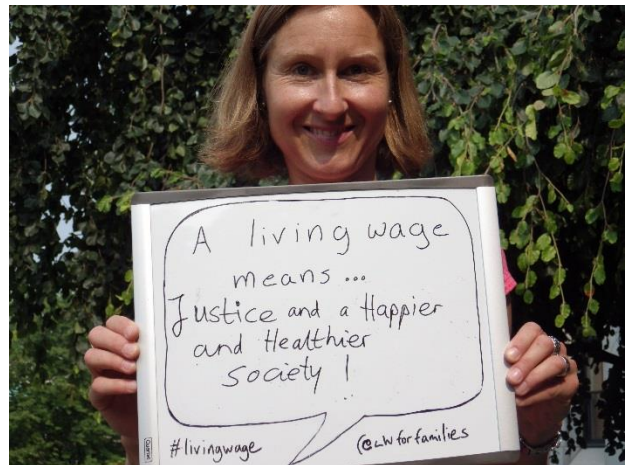
There are many business benefits to becoming a Living Wage Employer. It can be helpful to provide information on some of these benefits to the employer in your request to meet with them and in the meeting. The living wage campaign in Canada is new and growing rapidly so most of the long-term research on the benefits of the living wage is coming from the [Living Wage Foundation in England](#).

- Employers in the UK are reporting an average reduction in turnover of 50% after implementing a living wage.
- According to research, the majority of employers in the UK are reporting increases in productivity and about half report an increase in work quality.<sup>iii</sup>
- Having a third party certify a company as a Living Wage Employer helps increase consumer confidence in a company's ethical commitments.

### 3. Respect

Approaching employers in a respectful manner can help keep the door open for further conversations. The living wage relies on recruiting employers to voluntarily commit to paying all direct and contract staff a living wage. We focus on positive recruitment campaigns and building partnerships with Living Wage Employers. Active and engaged Living Wage Employers can make great advocates and can act as partners in our work on poverty reduction.

- Always leave the door open for further conversations.**
- Acknowledge the work that the employer is engaged in.**
  - What commitments have they made to environmental sustainability?
  - Is this company as concerned about poverty in your community as you are?
- Acknowledge that we are working towards common goals.** We are asking like-minded employers to partner with us on poverty reduction.



### 4. Listen

When we listen we can hear directly from the employer what their interest in the living wage is. In listening we can also hear what an appropriate response might be.

- Acknowledge** the challenges that the employer is facing.
- Ask** the employer what interests them most about the living wage campaign. Focus the conversation on their interests. For example: Is it community investment or sustainable business practices? There are many entry points into the living wage.
- Offer** to connect the employer with a similar company/organization that has gone through the process. Contact us at [info@livingwageforfamilies.ca](mailto:info@livingwageforfamilies.ca) if you would like us to introduce a particular employer to a current Living Wage Employer.

## 5. Follow up

Like any job interview or fundraising request we want to follow up with the employer. Send a quick email or call thanking them for their time; provide a summary of what was discussed and answer any questions that came up in the conversation that required additional information.

It is rare for employers to commit to becoming a Living Wage Employer after only one conversation. There are usually follow-up questions that come out of any meeting. Additionally, the individual you met with may have an approval process to go through in order to begin working on becoming a Living Wage Employer. The goal of the first conversation is to start to build a relationship.

# Good luck with your conversations!

Please feel free to reach out:

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Living Wage for Families Campaign

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<sup>i</sup> 2015 *Child Poverty Report Card*, First Call: BC Child and Youth Advocacy Coalition, <http://stillin5.ca>

<sup>ii</sup> *Report on the State of Public Health in Canada 2009*, Chief Public Health Officer, Government of Canada, <http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/cphorsphc-respcacsp/2009/fr-rc/pdf/cphorsphc-respcacsp-eng.pdf>

<sup>iii</sup> *Living Wage Employers: evidence of UK business Cases*, Andrea B. Coulson and James Bonner, [http://www.livingwage.org.uk/sites/default/files/BAR\\_LivingWageReport%20cropped%2021%2001.pdf](http://www.livingwage.org.uk/sites/default/files/BAR_LivingWageReport%20cropped%2021%2001.pdf)